



June 17, 2019

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

Earlier today, you received a letter from an array of public officials and Hollywood celebrities calling on you to shut down all shale gas development, production and associated activities across Pennsylvania. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who work and are supported by this industry, and the millions of Pennsylvanians who depend on access to affordable energy for their livelihood and basic needs, I urge you to reject this ridiculous request.

Fundamentally, it is shameful to exploit the very real and heart-breaking issues associated with childhood cancer; they should not be fodder to advance a political agenda.

In an effort to sensationalize their claims, the signatories assert that "*almost 12,000 wells have been drilled in these counties [Fayette, Greene, Washington & Westmoreland] since 2004.*" Easily-accessible information from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection shows that, between January 1, 2004 and May 31, 2019, a total of 11,998 wells have been drilled – *in the entire Commonwealth*. Within the four counties cited in the letter, 3,915 wells have been drilled, and of those, only 2,835 have been hydraulically fractured and are in production.<sup>1</sup> The signatories cannot be bothered with even the most basic fact-finding and instead manufacture data in their quest to denigrate and shut down a vital industry and the tens-of-thousands of associated family sustaining jobs. Similarly, this group that supposedly heralds "scientific evidence" adeptly avoids it when it does not support their preferred narrative.

While the signatories demonstrate keen interest in the media coverage of instances of cancer – and specifically Ewing sarcoma in Southwest PA – they somehow manage to miss entirely the WPXI interview with Kelly Bailey, M.D., Ph.D. of UPMC who explained the statistical and random variations of rare cancers that sometimes appear as "clusters." She concludes that, "*we have no data showing there's any environmental exposure, anything like that would lead to one developing Ewing sarcoma.*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PA Department of Environmental Protection Well Spud Report & March 2019 Production Report

<sup>2</sup> Doctor discusses rare cancer, February 13, 2019, WPXI,  
<https://www.wpxi.com/video?videoId=919681082&videoVersion=2.0>

The American Cancer Society concurs with Dr. Bailey's research, finding that *"there are no known lifestyle-related or environmental causes of Ewing tumors, so it is important to remember that at this time, nothing could have been done to prevent these cancers."*<sup>3</sup>

Further, while the signatories call for the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) to launch an investigation, they might consider first reviewing the work the department has already done to understand the instances of Ewing sarcoma in Washington County. PA DOH notes that *"studies of children with Ewing's tumors have not found link to radiation, chemicals or any other environmental exposures."* Ultimately, the department's Bureau of Epidemiology found that *"incidence rates for the Ewing's family of tumors and childhood cancers in Washington County and Canon-McMillan School District were not consistently and statistically significantly higher than expected."*<sup>4</sup>

The claims made by the signatories to the letter are an affront not only to the integrity of the researchers who have dedicated their lives to understanding rare cancers such as those affecting families in Southwest PA, but also to those who work in the industry, as well as the professionalism and expertise of your own environmental regulators and health professionals. These claims ignore the very science they purport should guide our collective decision-making, while casually dismissing the significant work of industry, elected officials and environmental regulators to raise substantially the environmental and public health protections and standards that accompany modern shale-gas development in Pennsylvania.

With the vast majority of our workforce being local to the Appalachian Basin, our families live and play in the same communities where we operate. The exploitation of the tragedies that have impacted our neighbors should evidence the insidious nature of the movement we are witnessing to shut down American shale gas development. We appreciate your support for the jobs, energy security and energy savings this industry has brought to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

David J. Spigelmyer  
President

cc: Honorable Rachel Levine, Secretary of Health

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<sup>3</sup> What Causes Ewing Tumors, American Cancer Society, <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/ewing-tumor/causes-risks-prevention/what-causes.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ewing's Family of Tumors, Childhood Cancer, and Radiation-Related Cancer Incidence Review for Washington County and Canon-McMillan School District in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, Division of Community Epidemiology, April 22, 2019, [http://marcelluscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ewings\\_washington\\_DOH-1.pdf](http://marcelluscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ewings_washington_DOH-1.pdf)

